

Story 971 (1961, Dictated)

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Nasreddin Hoca¹ Saves the Turtle

One day Nasreddin Hoca was riding along on his donkey. All went well until the donkey stopped suddenly without any warning. The donkey stopped that way because he saw a turtle in the road before him

When the donkey stopped suddenly, the Hoca fell off back and landed in the middle of the road. A number of children gathered around and began to make fun of him.

The Hoca then said, "Well, even if the donkey hadn't stopped, I intended to get down here anyway in order to carry this turtle off the road before it got run over and injured!"

¹A hoca is a Moslem priest. In Turkish folklore the best-known hoca is Nasreddin Hoca. Before the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923, education was in the hands of the clergy, and many a hoca was both priest and teacher. Nasreddin Hoca, a legendary character, played both these roles, and so he was the object of all the jokes and fun aimed at both teachers and preachers. He became Turkey's most beloved comic folk character. In the countless tales told about him he is alternately wise and foolish, alternately trickster and clown. But whatever his function, he is always very human, and it is this unfailingly human quality that endears him to everyone.